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ABSTRACT

An analysis of five mid-nineteenth century women's suffrage periodicals ("The Lily," "The Genius of Liberty," "The Una," "The Revolution," and "The Woman's Journal") suggests that the papers succeeded in creating, sustaining, and inspiring the suffrage community as it developed and matured, and in dramatizing and debating alternative versions of a new life style for women. In 1893, the 13,000 members enrolled in the official suffrage organization had few opportunities for face-to-face interaction and communication and saw themselves as poorly (negatively and infrequently) reported in the popular press. Thus it was through and with their own papers that the suffragists came together as a community. (AEA)

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THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY SUFFRAGE PAPERS IN CONSTRUCTING A COMMUNITY

> Our plan is, therefore, to publish a paper monthly, devoted to the interests of woman...Our purpose is to speak clear earnest words of truth and soberness, in a spirit of kindness...We shall not confine ourselves to any locality, set, sect, class, or caste, for we hold to the solidarity of the race, and believe that if one member suffers, all suffer, and that the highest is made to atone for the lowest.[1]

With these words Paulina Wright Davis launched her monthly paper in Providence, Rhode Island, in February 1853. Like many suffrage papers "Devoted to the Elevation of Woman," The Una emerged from the belief that women's political interests could not be served by the typical "Ladies' Magazines" or by ordinary papers, where their concerns would either be "mixed up with others of an opposite and lower character" or "crowded in out-of-the-way corners."[2]

Davis's rationale was not immediately accepted. Despite bitter complaints that "no other class of reformers has ever been so unwise," the national suffrage organization refused the suffrage papers both financial and symbolic support.[3] Jane Gray Swisshelm, who largely ignored the suffrage movement in the course of publishing her spirited political paper, speculated "People do not want a whole meal of one dish without sauce, or a whole paper on one subject...(W)hen (suffragists) get old enough they will conclude it is better to reach the public ear through papers already established and devoted to any number of things, than to get up an auditory of their own."[4]

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The Una continued, nevertheless, until Davis's health and money ran out in 1855. She boasted that her "pet child" had made its way into the hands of those who would never have heard a lecture, attended a convention or read a tract. "It has been a voice to many who could not have uttered their thoughts through any other channel--and we have abundant evidence that it has been a source of consolation looked for every month with anxious expectation to those who are in solitary places."[5]

This essay examines the role of nineteenth century suffrage periodicals like The Una in building, identifying, legitimizing, and sustaining the suffrage community. Despite their initial reluctance, suffragists quickly realized, as have other social and reform groups, the centrality of communications in advocating their interests and sustaining the members' sense of communality and identification. One editor warned that women ought to support their special organ "unless those who have toiled and hoped and struggled...are now willing to give up the warfare and surrender to irretrievable defeat."[6]

Suffragists did not use the word "community," assuming, as do many contemporary sociologists, that community requires territory.[7] Yet, precisely through its newspapers and journals, suffragists achieved what amount to be the defining characteristics of a community: acknowledgement of common goals and shared interests, participation in cooperative activity, self-conscious emphasis on loyalty and commitment. They used words like "sisterhood" and "sorority" (and, less often, esprit de corps); more importantly, they explicitly and proudly defined themselves in terms of their affiliation with the movement.

This study specifically focuses on four of the earliest American suffrage papers, published in the mid-nineteenth century, in order to illustrate how these papers gave meaning and coherence to the lives of a particular group of otherwise isolated and frustrated middle class women. In dramatizing new definitions of womanhood and in articulating the shared experiences, values, and visions, these papers essentially built a community. The latter half of this essay examines the two best-known suffrage periodicals as a way of illuminating symbolic conflicts and stylistic differences which plagued the movement internally.

Although neither a history of the movement nor institutional biographies of the papers will be provided here, a brief description of the periodicals to be included will help put them in a historical perspective.

Among the papers considered here is The Lily, begun in Seneca Falls, New York, by Amelia Bloomer in January 1849, only six months after the women's rights meeting there at which Elizabeth Cady Stanton and her friends first presented their "Declaration of Rights." The Lily emerged from the resentment of local temperance ladies that, while they could subsidize occasional lectures, "such a thing as their having anything to say or do further than this was not thought of."[8] The temperance society soon abandoned the project, but, Amelia Bloomer explained, "(W)hen rough winds were threatening to nip the tender bud, to save the credit of our sex and preserve our own honor, we breasted the storm."[9] The Lily quickly turned to women's rights.

Besides The Una and The Lily, the other pre-Civil War paper mentioned is Genius of Liberty, a little-known Cincinnati paper, edited by a well-intentioned but somewhat flowery Elizabeth Aldrich, from 1851 to 1853.

The notoriously radical (and predictably short-lived) Revolution was edited and published in New York City from 1868-70 by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony (and an abolitionist friend Parker Pillsbury). Whether or not Revolution's vigorous advocacy of a "strong-minded woman" positively defined the community to the outside world, it certainly factionalized the community. The very birth of The Revolution divided suffragists, for it was initially bankrolled by an outsider, George Francis Train, whose other political interests and eccentricities were inimical to the reform community with which most suffragists were allied.

Therefore, a more conservative weekly, The Woman's Journal, prescribing a more "responsible" woman, was established in 1870 in Boston by Lucy Stone, her husband Henry Blackwell, and some of their friends, including Julia Ward Howe, William Lloyd Garrison, and T.W. Higginson. Its first editor was Mary Ashton Livermore, who terminated her two year old Chicago suffrage paper The Agitator so that she could help out her Boston colleagues. The Woman's Journal lasted until 1930, a decade after ratification of the suffrage amendment.

CREATION OF THE SUFFRAGE COMMUNITY

Davis's reference in The Una (cited above) to the success of suffrage papers in reaching women "in solitary places" shows the sensitivity of suffrage editors to the problems of women who objected to existing definitions of women's place. The suffrage newspapers moved into a new landscape women who complained that they were politically and economically excluded as well as culturally and socially marginal, both because of the status of women generally at that time, and because of their commitment to a new life style specifically. Furthermore,

because these women were isolated in increasingly nuclear households where their domestic role seemed to them more decorative than productive (and where their new interests often met with indifference, if not hostility), their newspapers were essential in sustaining this nascent community as a sociological, cultural and affective unit.

Particularly for women too far and few between to join local suffrage clubs or travel to national conventions, suffrage papers were often the only lines of communication and thus, especially in the movement's early stages, the only means of maintaining community. Annual conventions were inspiring for those able to attend; conventions and meetings offered helpful opportunities for interaction among leaders. But these were not convenient, often or comprehensive enough to sustain enthusiasm and active commitment year around. Thus the suffrage journals provided all the necessary services of a geographically identified community paper, plus more. They reported on routines, achievements, projects, and gossip--who said what to whom, where, and when--confirming what was often already known. But they also dramatized major celebrations and ceremonies so that isolated women could feel that they, too, had participated. In and through communication (to modify slightly the famous words of John Dewey), suffragists came together as proud members of significant and glamorous community.

The suffrage papers dramatized for the converts an exciting, almost transcendent, but entirely plausible world in which their lives had special purpose and meaning. It was through the papers that these women saw themselves as sharing both a history and destiny, unique to them. Antoinette Blackwell correctly called the movement a "dictionary-maker."[10] To set off its language

from others, the social group's papers used new words and generated new definitions. The papers encouraged women--who otherwise bore no physical signs of membership in a community based on sentiment--to mark their participation symbolically by adopting a new way of dressing, specifically the bifurcated trowsers (which, because of Lily's publicity, became known as bloomers). The papers articulated new values and ways of judging. They introduced a new set of heroines by rewriting or rediscovering the past and by applying a unique perspective on the present. They taught suffragists how to argue, why to sacrifice, when to renounce; they explained and exhorted; they glorified both the togetherness of this community and its apartness from the larger society. Elizabeth Aldrich said, "We want a common nervous circulation, we want a general excitement, a common sensibility, a universal will, and a concordant action."[11] The suffrage press provided and celebrated just that.

While the papers invariably reflected their editors' personal styles, the papers were regarded not simply as communications to, but as communications of women. One early editor promised subscribers that the paper "belongs to All; every one will be heard in her own style, principle, and want; 'tis the common property of Woman...."[12] Setting the pattern for subsequent generations of suffrage editors, Bloomer declared that The Lily "is edited and published by Ladies, and to Ladies it will mainly appeal for her support. It is woman that speaks, and she will strive to be heard through the columns of The Lily...."[13] Thus the papers provided a channel through which women could not only communicate with one another but also declare their membership and their loyalties, both explicitly and indirectly.

The papers not only described and thereby prescribed lines of collective action, but also themselves served as an arena for collective behavior; they

provided the field on which participants could battle for the legitimacy and honor of their special world. That is, having articulated a newly satisfying style of life, the papers then argued that the new women deserved national prestige and respect. Since a constitutional amendment enfranchising women would unambiguously symbolize the desired status, the papers both advocated women's suffrage and showed women how to advocate it.

Sociologists who accepted a community of sentiment without physical propinquity emphasize that a sense of significance is as essential a communal element as a sense of solidarity.[14] In the case of the suffragists, the newspapers not only reminded readers that their participation at various levels was critical, that they all had roles to play, but that the community itself had an important function with reference to the larger society.

Suffragists conceded that, personally, they had suffered very little. Davis explained, "...individually we have suffered very few [wrongs], but in our sympathies, we have suffered from every affliction upon the dependent class to which we belong. We bear in our heart of hearts their sorrows and carry their griefs."[15] Elizabeth Aldrich likewise stressed that she proposed reform "because we consider it intrinsically valuable to Woman, and not because we are restless, ambitious, desirous to share in the rights of man, etc.; [it is] because the great Interests of our sex, of our race require it; because humanity pleads, and extends her million arms for it...."[16]

Such disclaimers may partly reflect unwillingness to dispute the traditional characterizations of women as unselfish and nurturant. To appease opponents and reassure potential converts, The Journal consistently justified suffrage in terms of social welfare; it stressed the redemptive quality of

women's involvement in national affairs. "We are coming now, Ulysses, with 15 million more/We are coming, we are coming, our country to restore" was, for instance, the refrain of a poem heralding suffragists' support of Grant in 1872.[17] Conversely, Revolution's relatively hard-headed mottos were "Men, Their Rights and Nothing More; Women, Their Rights and Nothing Less" as well as "Principle, not policy; Justice, not favors." But as a whole these middle class women genuinely believed that their political participation was necessary to reform government. They had a crucial job: to improve the lot of women, if not all humanity. Thus, while promoting a sense of "we-ness," the suffrage papers also promoted a certain relationship to "others."

Meanwhile, suffrage papers also sought to explain the slow and faltering quality of the contest. Typically they did not so much soften ridicule or notoriety as treat it as persecution. To bolster commitment which otherwise would have flagged in the face of repeated failures, the papers assured readers that "all important truths are at first rejected, and their ministers despised, persecuted, and often crucified."[18] Religious vocabulary colored editorials and letters to the editor. Missionary converts spread the gospel by buying subscriptions for those who had not yet seen the truth. In this sense, too, the editors were ministers, delivering their weekly or monthly sermons to a congregation which professed its devotion both in its eager written responses and in its sustained support.

But if suffrage followers might have preferred that ministerial analogy during moments of rapture, certainly the editors and the movement itself over the long run regarded suffrage editors more as political leaders. They were "mayors" who commanded respect and prestige as well as power, steered the population through rough times, represented the community to others, and

decided questions of both policy and operation. Nearly without exception, suffrage editors and publishers were movement leaders, organizers, and officials. If the mayors and publishers of territorially organized communities typically must remain separate to retain their power and avoid accusations of conflict of interest, in this particular moral community they were one and the same.

As in other communities, self-help and self-reliance (at the group level) as well as mutual loyalty among the membership were crucial to suffragists. Therefore, the suffrage press defended and applauded sisters of thier pioneering courage in joining the suffrage community, and for enacting their new values and responsibilities. Fiction, poems, editorials, anecdotes, biographies, political essays, even cartoons and advertising, presented more or less unambiguous models of sisterhood which were presumed to be not only central to the philosophy and style of the members, and to be inherently satisfying but also necessary to their very survival. Suffragists often debated whether (or to what extent) they could criticize one another; but most of them admitted that popular thought held that jealousy and backbiting would stymy women's reform efforts. Genius of Liberty urged readers to disprove such calumny, to "lay aside Envy, Gossip, Selfishness, Dissonance, Fault-Finding, and Haste, and become One in friendship, cooperation, sympathy, liberality, and individual culture."[19] Elizabeth Aldrich complained, "As a class we have been uncollected, unmarshalled, and destitute of a cementing spirit; no general duty has awakened us, no common effort has ever brought us together."[20] Suffrage papers provided the cement and the grounds for testing the depth and durability of that cement.

Actually, the sense of solidarity so important both in principle and in practice to suffragists was only dubiously achieved at first, partly because the context and boundaries of the community were ambiguous, and the conditions for membership sustained some challenges. As this essay's opening quotation from Pauline Davis suggests, suffragists assumed that their movement benefited all women and represented all women's true interests. Once truth and reason prevailed, all women would identify with suffragists. But indeed, working class women wholly rejected the style of the new women, and clearly most middle class women rejected it as well.

Furthermore, suffragists regularly disagreed on the particulars of the new woman they all demanded, and the various papers encouraged this factionalization. As will be described later, precisely because members were bound together by more than mutual rational interests, the suffrage community suffered division and disunity no less than any other community. Each sub-community sought its own papers as a means of promoting itself. (Over the years, dozens of suffrage papers started up across the country.) Yet while the papers themselves contributed to the disunity, they also nourished whatever sense of communality and consensus existed.

The papers also promoted solidarity by themselves exemplifying the communal spirit. Certainly one important and visible sign of loyalty was that suffrage papers were managed, owned, produced, and even distributed by women, as well as that their contents addressed women's sex-specific interests, noted women's accomplishments, and even advertised women's (but especially suffrage) products. Suffrage editors wishing to retire went to great pains to find like-minded colleagues to take over; when that was impossible, subscription lists were given to other suffrage papers. Again, this partly reflected concern that by

definition outsiders (especially men) could not properly advocate or even describe the movement. It also symbolized trust in and respect for the sorority and its collective abilities.

The principle that a community's paper should be self-produced was first tested for suffragists when the men who printed both The Lily and a reform-minded paper edited by Amelia's husband Dexter refused to help a woman whom Amelia had hired as a typesetter. The Bloomers fired the uncooperative printers, noting that the resulting delays and problems were "nothing compared with what had been gained on the side of justice and right...."[21]

Each suffrage paper regularly reported the successes and problems of other papers edited by women; this national exchange both encouraged and prodded suffrage editors. In its final issue (December 15, 1856), Lily noted, "When one women strikes a blow for the elevation of her sex, it redounds to the interest of the whole; and wherever one fails in her purposed plans all feel the calamity and contend against increased odds in maintaining their individual enterprise. We are bound together."

Indeed, women editing and publishing newspapers formed their own sub-community. One Vermont editor said that Bloomer and a few other women editors "contribute largely to our social and intellectual enjoyment and our ability to do and dare for the cause of humanity...Though necessarily cut off by our avocations from the usual social intercourse of villages and neighborhoods, with such and so many associates as our exchanges furnish, we feel no vacuum in our sympathies--are conscious of no social privations."[22] Bloomer replied that as much as she might like personally to meet the other women editors, jealous male editors would undoubtedly have them arrested for

treason. "So we must content ourselves with spiritual communion."[23]

More important were the frequently published testaments to the solidarity among readers nourished by suffrage papers. In reading the papers, women no longer felt alone; they felt stronger and surer, part of a larger and more significant community. Besides nourishing community pride, the papers were themselves objects of pride. Among those claiming to have been radically transformed as a result of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's paper, one satisfied customer testified, "Since the Revolution has removed the bandages from our eyes and the scales have fallen also, we begin to see women as 'trees walking'...."[24] A Journal reader asked rhetorically but enthusiastically, "Who takes up a copy of the Woman's Journal, and reads what women are doing all the world over, but feels a glow, a hearty cheer, in looking on the fields where these reapers are toiling...(W)hat Woman's heart is not stirred by the thought of this sisterhood...this holy order...."[25]

The papers not only inspired such personal transformation but also provided intimate friends. Descriptions of suffrage activists gave "face" and personality to the names. Readers responded with informal anecdotes, as if chatting over the fence to a neighbor. One regular correspondent interrupted herself saying, "But I am getting sentimental, and that I never wish to be in writing for The Lily, because it is such a little paper, and visits us so seldom that we want to see its leaves only filled with the practical and earnest truths of every-day life."[26] Similarly, an Ohio reader of The Mayflower, the only suffrage paper published during the Civil War, wrote editor Lizzie Bunnell, "How dear your little paper has become to me--how it cheers and strengthens me, even as the voice of a friend...it seems endowed with almost human sympathy; perhaps because the writers do not write

coldly from the head alone, but warm their glowing thoughts by the pure light of a true and earnest purpose that emanates from the heart."[27] Finally, a Journal reader from Michigan wrote, "I read over the names of the brave women till I feel as proud of them as if they were my own sisters and dearest friends."[28]

If such confessions suggest how, especially in its early days, the suffrage movement was sustained with little face-to-face contact, the community's continued growth and evolution still required a national transportation system. In January 1854, for example, The Lily's publishing home was successfully moved from Seneca Falls, New York, to Mt. Vernon, Ohio, where Dexter Bloomer had purchased an interest in a local paper. "We feel that it matters little in what part of the vineyard we are placed," Bloomer reasoned then.[29] Yet when Dexter moved again, this time to Council Bluffs, Iowa, Amelia sold her "pet" to a reform-minded newspaper woman. "The Western country is too sparsely settled to make it safe for us to rely upon it to support the papers; and the distance is too great and facilities for carrying mails too insufficient for us to calculate on a large eastern circulation," Amelia Bloomer explained.[30] Although this community did not require spatial proximity, it did require technological advances permitting circulation of the papers across distances.

STYLISTIC CONFLICTS WITHIN THE SUFFRAGE COMMUNITY

With the Revolution, the national suffrage movement finally enjoyed a passionately radical organ comprehensively addressing the questions and problems facing the community. Ironically, however, this very breadth--as

well as Revolution's highly politicized and aggressive style--polarized suffragists and quickly provoked establishment of a competing suffrage group with its own organ, its own style and vision.

Revolution was not the first suffrage paper to use strong language or to call for martyrdom. In an editorial called "The Influence of Opinions on the Character," mild-mannered Davis claimed that "to refuse to consider a cause actively was not simply neutrality, but was to oppose reform and support the status quo. When the blood-stained heroism of the battlefield demands the homage of our admiration, we must either bravely rebuke the ruffian crime or partake its guilt."[31] Furthermore, Davis, as did most other suffrage editors, had broadly defined the paper as addressing: "the Rights, Relations, Duties, Destiny, and Sphere of Woman. Her Education--Literary, Scientific, and Artistic. Her Avocation--Industrial, Commercial, and Professional. Her Interests--Pecuniary, Civil and Political."

Certainly agreeing with such a condemnation of apathy, Stanton and Anthony abandoned philosophical treatises and abstract descriptions of the cause and explicitly extended the conception of the reform, the community, and its interests. Revolution aggressively confronted questions of work, co-education, money and wages, child-rearing, physical exercise, dress reform, marriage, divorce, sexual politics, partisan politics, cooperation with other reform movements including black civil rights, economic class conflict, and the role of women in religion. In short, it articulated a peculiarly politicized world view by which converts could understand, judge, and act on the very real and problematic issues of the day.

Revolution's staff tried to steer the community to a highly politicized understanding of its moral obligations to poor and persecuted women, even "fallen women," and to a moral understanding of its political obligations to reform the legislature and banks. Ironically, while this specificity in identifying and extending the boundaries of the community set strong-minded women apart from other suffragists, Revolution was no more successful in achieving programmatic success. Despite Revolution's repudiation of "upper ten-dom," working women were predictably reluctant to embrace what was still a clearly middle class movement; working class men would have nothing to do with suffrage sympathizers.

Revolution not only justified rebellion ("Rebellion in defense of justice, mercy, and the higher law is always in order"[32]) but exploited militaristic vocabulary to encourage able-bodied soldiers to "help carry on the war of the Revolution."[33]

Naturally Revolution dealt with suffrage--explaining why women sought enfranchisement, showing why men ought to enfranchise women, refuting and undermining positions of both male and female "antis," speculating on the (positive) consequences of the movement, promoting suffrage pamphlets and lectures, heralding instances where women had voted or attempted to vote, celebrating suffrage heroines, citing parallel "straws in the wind" which suggested inevitable if not imminent victory, and teaching lobbying and organizing techniques. Revolution made the community's work more effective by defining the central cause, by strengthening the resolve of members and shoring up their identification with the group, and by broadcasting the aims to the larger society.

Revolution's model of and for a community of strong-minded women was often inconsistent; Anthony, Stanton, and their followers reasoned that demonstrating that women could and would speak out authoritatively was more important than ideological consistency. They never apologized for the fact that members of a newly emerging and evolving community needed to experiment. On principle and in terms of principle, they eliminated the term "compromise" from their vocabulary, in favor of notions of adamancy, verve, and power. Yet, this does not mean that they neglected all forms of negotiation. The weekly offered the opportunity to try out different lines of attack, different rationales, as well as different characterizations of their style so that they could find which ones were most intellectually and emotionally satisfying and effective.

Complicating this process was the fact that a larger and not necessarily sympathetic audience also witnessed this highly charged drama. Revolution's editors wished to attract and organize a national or even international audience. They saw themselves as addressing questions of significance to all society, and claimed that their style and vision deserved national recognition. To the extent that they achieved this "publicity," however, they sacrificed opportunities for rehearsal, for backstage revisions in script and direction, and for invisible cues and costume changes. Hostile critics gleefully pounced on each indication of inconsistency and in-fighting.

Revolution enjoyed some success. Readers publicly congratulated Revolution's belligerence, "so different from the namby-pamby milk-and-water journals that dare not publish the truth."[35] A small group of suffragists admired the Revolution-ary image and tried to live up to the reputation of

the new woman who was "strong-minded," energetic, politicized, aggressive, assertive, and even arrogant.

A greater percentage of suffragists, however, apparently regarded Revolution's "strong-minded" women as repugnantly unfeminine, if not "mannish," as arrogant and vulgar, if not immoral. Lucy Stone and her followers believed that a more dignified and responsible version of the new woman was not only "better" per se, but also more likely to attract support and response. Her Woman's Journal would unify women drawn along these new lines and would organize their fight for legitimacy. Stone assured women that a suffragist could be courageous, dedicated and active, yet still be "a genuine woman, gentle, tender, refined, and quiet."[36]

The Journal relied on extensive donations of money and time from its staff; but the columns of display and classified advertising, the nation-wide datelines on the articles and correspondence, the reference to stock-holders, are all visible evidence of The Journal's success in quickly establishing itself as a broad-based organ speaking for "the" national suffrage community. Henry Blackwell claimed that all 7000 copies of the second (January 15) issue were sold--whereas when debt-ridden Anthony sold Revolution, that two and a half year old paper had only 3000 subscribers.[37] Letters from suffragists as well as articles republished from exchanges suggest that no one missed the changes in theme, style, and tone, although even as conservative a supporter as Harriet Beecher Stowe remarked that Journal descriptions of "reformeress' [sic] marble brows" were a bit too "high-falutin.'"[38]

The Journal promised to cooperate and respect alternative versions of the cause. The marriage of The Journal with a Dayton suffrage paper called The Woman's Advocate provided an opportunity to express its desire to be broadminded.

"It will be published in the interest of no persons, clique, or locality. It will welcome all friends of Woman Suffrage who are willing to work harmoniously and fraternally with us...."[39] As opposed to Revolution, which boasted that "The time has passed for Lilys, Sybils, Unas, Mayflowers, Dewdrops, etc. and we have come to The Revolution,"[40] The Journal pointed out that its name "is not pretentious, not sensational, not sentimental."[41]

But "responsible" women were more interested in distinguishing themselves from radical types than in cooperating. Stone's group rejected several peace offers from Stanton's faction over the next twenty years, arguing that "peace, at the expense of principle, and union, at the sacrifice of individual freedom, are never worth having."[42] Tactfully defending their opposition to "extremism," responsible women argued that, given the intensity and variety of the opposition, no one weapon or tactic exclusively served.

Likewise, when some "strong-minded" women seemed reluctant to attack the "free-love" philosophy and seemed willing to allow free-lovers on their platform, The Journal vigorously disavowed notoriety. When ridiculed for over-emphasizing "pure-hands," staff writer Miriam Cole defended "straight-laced propriety." Sisterhood stopped short of prostitutes; the presence of "fallen women" among "responsible women" was "an insult not to be borne."[43]

But if The Journal declined to extend the olive branch to competing suffragists and to fallen women, it did want to attract other new women, as well as men, as converts. Bridge building was important not only to muster support but also to help members deal with a problematic sense of divided loyalties--for these suffragists were also wives, mothers, friends, and members of other kinds of communities, whether territorial or affective.

The Revolution had stuck to principle in advocating the cause and seemed to counsel complete renunciation of "outside" relationships. Again, The Journal, while not entirely neglecting the "justice" of enfranchisement, reasoned that suffragists' interests were identical to humanity's; it stressed the expediency and social benefit of enfranchisement. The very act of participating in the suffrage movement would morally transform women into one universal community. Julia Ward Howe, whose favorite theme was peace and cooperation, predicted that now that women had finally worked together, "they will not go back from this great union to any small and selfish division... Small envy, petty jealousy and unfounded dislike will now give way and women will regard each other with the largeness and liberty of reasonable beings."[44]

"Responsible" women's inclusion of males in the community may also be seen as part of the attempt to integrate this community into the larger one. To this end Blackwell and Higginson demanded not only good humor and an end to rancor toward men as a sex, but also men's participation, for an "anti-woman society cannot be reformed by an anti-man affair."[45] Blackwell added in his editorial "Truth Knows No Sex": "Henceforth let it be understood that the Woman Suffrage movement is not a woman's movement, but a movement of men and women for the common benefit."[46] Except as narrow and temporary protests against exclusively male institutions, all women's institutions (including women's colleges) were criticized. Mocking the idea of lectures for women, Higginson said, "What women need is not a separate repast, however choicely served; they need only their fair share in the daily family dinner."[47]

Again, to promote community harmony and minimize disaffection, The Journal steered away from controversial political subjects. Ironically, then, when

readers requested more articles on world affairs--on issues on which women wanted to vote--Blackwell answered that The Journal should represent interests of women as a class, not interests women shared with men. Blackwell remarked on another irony: one reader cancelled her Journal subscription because it was offensively Christian; another, because it ill-concealed its bitter hatred of Christianity.[48]

This does not mean, however, that The Journal ignored symbolic dimensions or stylistic ambiguities. For example, it agreed with preceding suffrage papers on the importance of names in symbolizing one's stance. Women were told to identify themselves by their own names, not their husbands'. Although a few readers doubted that calling women by nicknames would prevent the millenium, others warned women not to use babyish pet names and diminutives if they wanted respect.[49]

More significantly, The Journal understood that its responsibility was still to spur supporters; that dignified good-will and decorum did not themselves rally a community into action. Thus The Journal also indulged in satire, it vented its anger and frustration and complained and protested with heady metaphors and powerful examples. In an editorial, "Unrighteous Indignation," Miriam Cole lashed out at male hypocrisy and chivalry. She translated men's "obsequious attentions, the profuse offers of protection" as meaning "come not up higher, darling, for it is easier patronizing you while you stand a few feet lower down."[50] Male characters in fiction were typically fools or brutes, and The Journal regularly publicized examples of male exploitation and oppression of women. The Journal reminded women of the importance of moral determination and self-respect. "Fetters are none the less such, nor do

they symbolize any less degraded conditions...because, instead of being rough and ragged, they are smooth and wreathed in roses."[51]

Miriam Cole even admitted the usefulness of "Sharp Women," those crafty, suspicious and obnoxious women who "sting us into duty."[52] Similarly, then, The Journal would not appease and placate, but would eternally rouse the community to an indignant sense of itself and its value.

Although the proportionate emphases shifted, the suffrage papers always managed a necessary and crucial double role: to encourage converts by celebrating their accomplishments and victories, and to stir them, by warning them against apathy and by reminding them of continuing suffering. A thorough examination using a cultural approach suggests that the papers succeeded in creating, sustaining, and inspiring the suffrage community as it developed and matured, and in dramatizing and debating alternative versions of a new life style for women. That is, the writings of suffragists suggest that the women can legitimately be described as constituting a community; the spirit, elements, and process of community are evident. But the community was small (even by 1893, the official suffrage organization had enrolled only about 13,000 members[53]), had few opportunities for face-to-face interaction and communication, and saw itself as poorly (negatively and infrequently) reported in the popular press. Thus it was through and with their own papers that the suffragists came together as a community.

ENDNOTES

1. The Una, February 1, 1853, p. 1.

2. The Una, February 1, 1853, p. 4; December 1854, p. 383; February 1855, p. 25.

3. The Una, December 1854, p. 376-77.

4. The Una, February 1855, p. 25, quoting The Saturday Visiter [sic].

5. The Una, December 1854, p. 376-77.

6. The Mayflower, November 15, 1861, p. 168.

7. Many sociologists claim that using "community" to refer to non-geographically based units weakens the term and confuses the issue. This point is made for example by Dennis E. Poplin, Communities: A Survey of Theories and Methods of Research (New York: Macmillan, 1979). Of 94 definitions of community, Hillery found that three-quarters agreed on the presence of area and social interaction as necessary elements of community. George A. Hillery Jr., "Definitions of Community: Areas of Agreement," Rural Sociology, 20, 1955. See also: Colin Bell and Howard Newboy, Community Studies (New York: Praeger, 1974); Roland Warren, The Community in America (Rand, MacNally and Co., 1963). Without providing a precise definition, Gusfield describes non-territorial communities of "relation" in Joseph Gusfield, Community: A Critical Response (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1975).

8. Dexter Bloomer, Life and Writings of Amelia Bloomer (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), p. 40.

9. The Lily, January 1853, p. 2.

10. The Woman's Journal, April 3, 1886, p. 108.

11. Genius of Liberty, November 15, 1852, p. 12. Comparisons of the suffrage community to nineteenth century communes may be interesting, given the similarity of the language used here and techniques used by utopian communes to maintain commitment, described by Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).

12. Genius of Liberty, October 1852, p. 1.

13. The Lily, November 1, 1849, p. 88.

14. This point is made by R.M. MacIver and C.H. Page, Society (London: Macmillan, 1961).

15. The Una, February 1, 1853, p. 4.

16. Genius of Liberty, October 1832, p. 1.

17. The Woman's Journal, October 13, 1872, p. 324.

18. The Revolution, May 7, 1868, p. 280-81.

19. The Genius of Liberty, October 1852, p. 1.

20. The Genius of Liberty, November 15, 1852, p. 12.

21. The Lily, April 15, 1854, p. 59. Ironically, although Revolution was the paper most insistent on the importance of suffrage papers being managed and operated by women, most critical of suffrage papers which allowed participation by men, and most self-conscious about encouraging women to enter trades, it was itself challenged for not using women printers.

22. The Lily, March 1850, p. 23.

23. Ibid.

24. The Revolution, October 29, 1868, p. 260.

25. The Woman's Journal, December 28, 1872, p. 412.

26. The Lily, December 1852, p. 98.

27. The Mayflower, November 15, 1861, p. 169.

28. The Woman's Journal, January 22, 1870, p. 18.

29. Bloomer, op cit., p. 29.

30. The Lily, December 1854, p. 181.

31. The Una, November 1853, p. 169-9.

32. The Revolution, June 11, 1868, p. 361.

33. The Revolution, May 7, 1868, p. 281.

34. The Una, December 1853, p. 182.

35. The Revolution, October 29, 1868, p. 260.

36. The Woman's Journal, July 29, 1871, p. 236.

37. The Woman's Journal, January 22, 1870, p. 17; Ida Husted Harper, Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony (Indianopolis: Hollenbeck Press, 1898; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1969), Vol I, p. 354.

38. The Woman's Journal, September 3, 1870, p. 273.

39. The Woman's Journal, August, 13, 1870, p. 252.

40. The Revolution, May 14, 1868, p. 295.

41. The Woman's Journal, January 22, 1870, p. 17.

42. The Woman's Journal, January 7, 1871, p. 2.

43. The Woman's Journal, April 15, 1871, p. 120.

44. The Woman's Journal, October 13, 1872, p. 324.

45. The Woman's Journal, May 28, 1870, p. 164-5.

46. Ibid.

47. The Woman's Journal, September 14, 1872, p. 290.

48. The Woman's Journal, March 16, 1878, p. 84.

49. The Woman's Journal, April 3, 1886, p. 106; April 24, 1886, p. 134-5.

50. The Woman's Journal, June 8, 1872, p. 177.

51. The Woman's Journal, April 16, 1870, p. 116.

52. The Woman's Journal, August 13, 1870, p. 256.

53. Aileen S. Kraditor, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920 (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1971), p. 5. Kraditor says that membership grew to 17,000 in 1905, 45,000 in 1907, 100,000 in 1915, and to 2,000,000 in 1917.